



# Suicide Prevention & Readiness in the National Guard (SPRING)

Suicide devastates our fighting forces, our military families, and the nation's communities. It is the second leading cause of death for military Service members. In response, the National Guard Bureau's Warrior Resilience & Fitness (WRF) Division established Suicide Prevention and Readiness in the National Guard (SPRING).

SPRING is a multiphase approach that uses an evidenced-based foundation to build data-driven tools and models that can be scaled and evaluated for impact. SPRINGboard is the tool designed specifically by the National Guard (NG) to analyze critical data on the health and well-being of their Service members. SPRINGboard will directly tie mission support activities to operational readiness for the Guard.

## **PARTNER WITH SPRING:** HOW YOU CAN HELP

- + Champion this work! Tell us what you need to better serve NG Service members. What data would be helpful? What program support do you need? What policies have, or have not, worked in the past?
- + Tell us about your experiences. How do you define Service member and unit resilience? What has helped you increase resilience and overall wellness for individuals and units?
- + Connect the SPRING team with key program stakeholders at the state, territory, and federal levels.
- + Share data with us. Our understanding of the scope of the problem is only as good as the data we have.

**To Help the National Guard  
prevent negative outcomes and increase the  
overall wellness of the force, contact:  
SPRINGboard@bah.com**

## Challenges

- + NG Service members face unique challenges in comparison to their Active Duty counterparts, including: geographic dispersion, significant time between drill activities, access to care, and healthcare eligibility.
- + The NG has much more to learn about specific risk factors for their Service members.
- + Air and Army National Guard prevention strategies and programs for intervention vary widely throughout the 54 states, territories, and DC.

Thus, the 2019 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) directed the NGB to implement a unified psychological health initiative to reduce suicide.

## SPRINGboard

- + SPRINGboard is the first NG-specific readiness tool built in partnership with the Department of Defense.
- + The evidenced-based, data-driven tool uses machine learning to gain a better understanding of the risk and protective factors relevant to the force by state.
- + SPRINGboard helps NG leaders make more informed decisions about the health and well-being of their Service members.



### Evidence Assessment

We examine evidence from literature related to suicide risk factors, protective factors, and potential predictive factors in the NG Service member population.

**WHY DO THIS?** To inform analytic methods that help predict NG Service member risk of suicide and measure the effectiveness of resilience and readiness programs.



### Program Assessment

We study programs offered at the federal, state, and territory level.

**WHY DO THIS?** To understand existing and emerging best practices, allowing WRF to promote the most promising and effective interventions to the NG across the nation.



### Analytics

We are building a comprehensive database of NG personnel data at every level and developing a dashboard and data visualizations to help NG leaders respond to suicide risk and improve force readiness with reliable data.

**WHY DO THIS?** To improve data quality and fidelity through alignment of data collection and reporting protocols that will allow the NGB to pioneer a unified approach to data-driven decision-making and suicide prevention.

